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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - FAO CONFERENCE ON WORLD
FOOD SECURITY

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Friday morning included a potential scandal at the Ministry of Finance, which disclosed on Thursday that 383 ministry officials have admitted to receiving inducements, including cash, from taxi drivers to use their companies' services exclusively for trips reimbursed with taxpayer money.

¶2. "Blueprint Necessary for Age of Food Shortages" The liberal Asahi editorialized (6/6): "...The FAO Conference on world food security was expected to establish a new international order for an age of food shortages. It is regrettable that differences, rather than agreements, ended up being highlighted. The first problem was the confrontation between food importers and exporters over food export restrictions. Another issue was the gap between nations promoting biofuels, such the U.S. and Brazil, and countries opposing the move.... The world is shifting from an age of abundance to one of shortages. New approaches will be needed to adjust to the new era, and swift preparations are necessary ahead of the G-8 summit in July."

¶3. "Effective Measures Needed" The liberal Mainichi's editorial argued (6/6): "...At the food summit in Rome, the U.S. and Brazil, which are promoting biofuels, strongly challenged criticism that biofuels are the cause of rising food prices, calling that argument an exaggeration. Food importers and exporters argued over food export restrictions. However, food issues directly impact people's lives, so it is an urgent task to implement effective measures regardless of the debate at the food summit."

¶4. "Food Summit Presents First Step" The moderate Yomiuri's report from Rome stated (6/6): "A declaration to be adopted at the world food summit on Thursday will

be the first step for the international community to create a new framework to overcome the current food crisis. The roughly 150 participants at the conference shared a common understanding of the seriousness of the situation. They agreed on the need to increase agricultural production worldwide as a long-term solution.... Although the conference failed to include such issues as export restrictions and biofuels in its agreement, the participating nations shared a common perception on the importance of the need for additional research and dialogue on such issues. G-8 nations will need to come up with specific measures at their upcoming summit in July."

SCHIEFFER